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Title: Need to appoint a full time Chairman of Rubber Board and also promote the cultivation and production of natural rubber in the Country.

SHRI ANTO ANTONY (PATHANAMTHITTA) : I request the Government to kindly appoint a Chairman for the Rubber Board. The rubber sector is undergoing a difficult period due to the massive import of natural rubber and subsequent fall in prices. Due to the continuous, steady and steep fall in the prices, the growers are withdrawing from rubber cultivation. Most of them are not tapping the latex as the production cost exceeds the returns from the rubber cultivation. It resulted in 11 per cent drop in the production of natural rubber last month compared to October 2014. Main tapping season in the country spans during October to January, hence, fall in production in this season will affect the prospects of the rubber growers. This is the time to support the rubber growers in the country, otherwise rubber cultivation in the country will wither away in a short span of time. Therefore, I request the Government to kindly revamp the rubber sector by appointing a fulltime Chairman of Rubber Board and also by promoting the cultivation and production of natural rubber and ensure reasonable prices for the same.